

Editorials

Dollars for Old Roads Won't Build New Ones

AS A CONDITION of federal aid, the U.S. Department of Transportation has required the states to adopt not only higher standards for primary highways but also for secondary roads.

We believe there is general approval of the new standards on relocated highways which are being entirely reconstructed. But there is considerable dissatisfaction with the requirement that existing highways must be brought up to the costly new standards if repair work is done on them.

BLACK HAWK County Engineer Ray Stevenson, for example, attempted this year to obtain Iowa Highway Commission approval of a resurfacing job on County Road E north of Dewar. He was informed that such resurfacing would also require the widening of shoulders, and a reduction in ditch slopes which, in turn, would require the acquisition of additional right-of-way.

Moreover, the new standards require the leveling of hills to improve sight distances — a change which would be extremely expensive and cause the loss of a considerable part of the original investment in the road.

But the Iowa Highway Commission, in accordance with federal requirements, has drawn a careful distinction between "construction" and "maintenance." Any resurfacing with bituminous material less than three-fourths inch thick is considered "maintenance" and does not require reconstruction of the road.

Therefore, Black Hawk County will sealcoat about 30 miles of blacktop road

this year rather than resurface with a three-inch mat. Thus, the effect of the new "safety" standards is to force counties to temporary expedients in the hope of preserving road surfaces. The enforcement of higher standards does not in this case bring any early improvement in the safety features of these highways.

Ultimately, of course, the county will be forced to undertake the gradual reconstruction of most of the 125 miles of blacktop highway. This can be done only at the cost of sharply curtailing the contemplated blacktopping of other county roads.

THIS RECONSTRUCTION will improve safety conditions of the highways and probably save lives. But additional lives will probably be lost because of delay in more moderate reconstruction of existing roads and because there are no funds for much additional paving to the new standards.

We believe counties should be required to provide at least a four-foot shoulder on all existing paved roads. But reconstruction standards which prevent the addition of new blacktop highways to the county network may not in the end save lives. Moderate improvement in the safety conditions on all old highways, in other words, might well save more lives than full compliance on only a few miles each year.

But when the federal government says "jump," everybody down the line must jump. Washington is using our federal tax dollars to enforce uniform national decisions which could better be made closer to home.

would pay about 3 per cent yearly in dividends.

Stock purchases have been recommended by the fund's Advisory Investment Board following counsel by Moody's Investors Service, Inc. Significantly, however, the board in April did not invest the planned \$500,000 in stocks but authorized Moody's to place the orders at their discretion. As a result, only \$88,000 was invested in April.

The Advisory Board has entered the field of common stock purchases cautiously and carefully. But the IPERS fund is far better able than the individual investor to ride out fluctuations in the market and use its common stock purchases as an inflation hedge. Its far greater investments in high-grade bonds protects the security of the fund and guarantees that all pay-outs can be made on schedule.

Initial Profit In IPERS Stock

FOLLOWING authorization by the 1967 session of the Iowa legislature, officials of the Iowa Public Employees' Retirement System decided to invest \$5 million of the fund in common stocks at the rate of \$500,000 a month.

The first purchases were made on Dec. 4 of last year and the latest included in a recent audit by State Auditor Lloyd Smith were on April 5 of this year.

AS OF APRIL 19, the fund had paid out \$2,117,455.02 for stock purchases, including commissions. On that date the market value of these stocks was \$2,189,775, a gain of \$72,319.98 in value or 3.42 per cent. In addition, the stocks at current yield and not counting stock dividends

Around the Corner

SAYS GOVERNMENT TOO VITAL TO LEAVE IN HANDS OF PEOPLE

By EDDIE TORRIELL
IT IS A SHAMEFUL thing when the elected representatives of the people ignorantly take a position on any technical or cultural matter.

The Des Moines City Council showed its defiance of modern trends when it protested the showing of certain pictures to school children at the Des Moines Art Center.

Although the center is supported by tax funds, the councilmen are not going to have any voice in what is done there. Some of the council members have even been sued by art enthusiasts in an attempt to establish that only the selection committee is competent to decide how the tax funds shall be spent.

State Officials Ignorant
Then a professional selection committee de-

cided that a beautiful but non-representational piece of sculpture by Belgian artist Olivier Strebelle should be displayed near the new Grimes State Office Building.

Several members of the State Executive Council, all elected officials, had the temerity to describe the sculpture as junk; but they were quickly informed that they had exceeded their powers in expressing an opinion on such things.

The Iowa Arts Council pointed out that the selection had been made by a group of "knowledgeable, trained people." It declared that, "It is an unfortunate situation when a governmental body usurps such a decision."

Principle Must Be Expanded
Obviously, the logic of this argument cannot be limited merely to artistic matters.

If only artists are competent to select art objects financed by tax funds, then only economists are qualified to determine what taxes should be levied.

And City Councils have no business trying to decide what funds should be spent for street improvements. That should be left to a panel of expert street department employees.

Furthermore, what business does the U.S. Senate have in trying to assist the President in foreign affairs? That should be left to a group of professors from Harvard who obviously are better qualified in this field than these elected politicians.

So the average voter should be informed that he has no business trying to influence decisions on public affairs. He should just pay his taxes and leave the running of government to the experts.

After all, the voter is too stupid to have any valid opinion in these matters. His only function is to pay the bills and keep his mouth shut.

Courier Background Report

County Solons View Annual Sessions

Most Follow Party Lines On Issue

By JIM AVEY
Courier Staff Writer

BLACK HAWK County legislators have some strong opinions on the questions of annual sessions and full-time legislators, and generally speaking, party line influence is strong. But there are some differences of opinion within parties.

The Courier asked two questions of past and present legislators who could be reached. The questions were: "Do you think annual sessions would lead to virtually year-around sessions?" and, "Would professional legislators be more or less susceptible to lobbying influences?"

Here are the answers.

Messery Opposed

Republican State Senators Chester O. Houghton and Francis Messery were adamantly opposed to annual sessions. Messery gave as one reason the fact that there is nothing in the Constitutional amendment which limits the length or subject matter of the session.

Melvin Wolf, former Democratic representative, takes the opposite tack. "If we get into annual sessions, 90 days per session should be about sufficient," he said. He added that the length of sessions could be set by statute. Wolf takes the position that annual sessions would eliminate some of the repetition now facing the legislature.

But Rep. W. Charlene Conklin, a Republican, said: "Year-long legislative sessions are to be expected if the voter accepts this proposed constitutional amendment, which limits the session to neither a maximum number of days or to appropriations and emergency legislation in the even-numbered (election) years."

She went on to say, "Iowans who work at a job that requires day to day effort have made the necessary sacrifices to income and family to serve as representatives or senators when the legislature met every other year. But few occupations are sufficiently flexible to allow the active, involved, productive citizen to spend as much as four to six months each year away from a job."

'Not Year-Around'

Her opinion is not shared by Lt. Governor Robert Fulton, a Democrat, who says he doesn't think annual sessions would grow into year-around sessions. He says, "I believe the increase in the workload on our legislature is a result of the changes in our economic and social structure. The length of the legislative sessions will have to be adjusted to the workload, but I don't see annual sessions growing into year-around sessions in the near future."

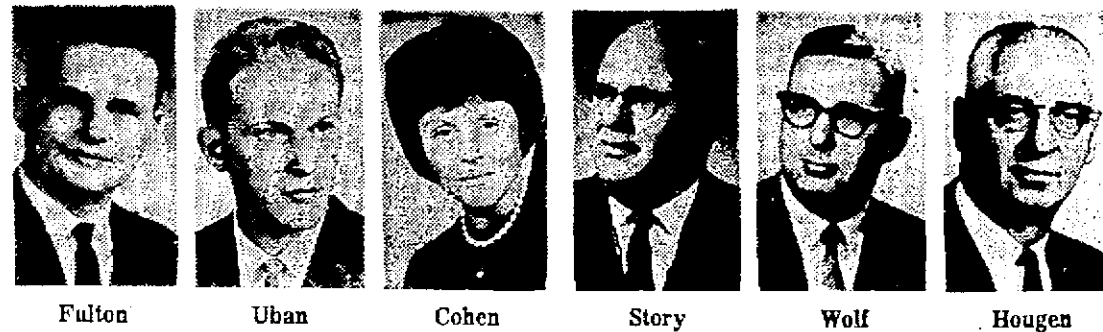
Rep. Mel Story, Republican, said simply that he has voted against annual sessions in the past and is opposed to the idea because too many people would be trying to make a vocation of legislative service.

But Donald Voorhees, Republican state representative, does not share the opinion of annual sessions held by most Republicans. "I do not feel that annual sessions will lead to virtually year-around sessions for several reasons," he said. "First of all, with the passage of the Home Rule Amendment, about one-third of the legislation which we have had to consider will be eliminated. This legislation is time consuming. Annual sessions will mean experienced legislators in the second session who will be familiar with the legislative process and will be able to accomplish a great deal more in a lot less time."

Voorhees also said, "I feel we must change the method of compensation from the per diem pay to an annual salary. Legislators are not going to spend any more time in session than is necessary with an annual salary. The experience of most other states where they have annual sessions has not



Waterloo Sunday Courier Drawing by Jack Bender



been year-around sessions."

'Allow More Time'

One of our lady ex-legislators has no fear of annual sessions, either. Mrs. Gertrude Cohen, Democrat and past state representative, said, "I don't think annual sessions would lead to year-around sessions, particularly if the Home Rule amendment is passed in the next election. I don't think the state would have enough business to need year-around sessions."

"I'm in favor of annual sessions because sometimes we have bills that need adjustment, and as the situation is now, we need to wait two years for that adjustment," she continued. "Annual sessions would also allow us the time to study

bills more thoroughly."

James Gallagher, Democratic state representative, said his idea of annual sessions would be "to go down each year for a shortened session, and keep up to date. The hope is that sessions could be shortened to about three months each year." But he conceded the day would come when sessions could stretch out over much of the year.

A Democratic state senator, Gene Condon, is emphatic in his support of annual sessions. "I think annual sessions would be shorter sessions," he said. "Without a doubt they wouldn't last over 90 days."

Charles Urban, former Democratic representative, said Colorado's experience with annual sessions has been that they

are shorter, not longer. He also said annual sessions make budgeting problems easier.

Lobbying Influence

The legislators also had some strong feelings on the second question, "Would professional legislators be more or less susceptible to lobbying influences?"

Lt. Gov. Fulton said, "Whether we have annual sessions or not will not affect a legislator's susceptibility to lobbying from a standpoint of morality. If annual sessions with continuing committees comes about, I think legislators would be less susceptible than they are now, because they would have more information at hand."

Senator Messery said, "The

professional legislator, who would be dependent on reelection for a living, would be more likely to play ball with pressure groups. I see fading out of the picture the citizen legislator with no axe to grind."

He added that such a change would see a reduction in the quality of the legislation.

Melvin Wolf said he didn't think any system to be developed here would lead to professional legislators. But he said he thinks legislators should be compensated adequately; they wouldn't then be so susceptible to pressure. Wolf also said he thought we should have some anti-lobbying legislation.

'Less Susceptible'

Voorhees said, "I feel that professional legislators would be less susceptible to lobbying influence or pressure. Legislators are more dependent on lobbyists for information with bi-annual sessions due to the heavy work load and the inexperience of the legislators. It is impossible to be knowledgeable on 1,500 bills thrown at you all at once. Here again, annual sessions would eliminate some of the dependence of legislators on lobbyists."

"The lobbyists themselves are against annual sessions and have organized to defeat the constitutional amendment for annual sessions. This fairly well points out that they feel that they would have much less influence with the professional legislators."

However, Houghton feels the professional legislators would be more susceptible to pressure groups than citizen legislators.

Gallagher thinks the individual is the key, but agreed that professional legislators might in fact tend to listen to special interest groups.

"But, I don't know," he added. "The special interest groups do well enough with today's legislators." He finished by saying that ties could develop between those special interest groups and professional legislators.

Condon says the professional legislators would be less susceptible to lobbyists. "If they were professional, and were to get an adequate salary, they would become less and less susceptible to pressure."

'Semantic Argument'

Mrs. Cohen had this to say about professionalism in the legislature: "I think the question of professional legislators is a semantic-type argument. Taxpayers are reluctant to pay salaries large enough to create a class of "professional" legislators."

"As far as resistance to lobbying pressures, I simply don't know. Many legislators return year after year and get to know the lobbyists personally. Are they susceptible to lobbying pressures? I think we must elect people of integrity and if we do, this will not be a problem."

Urban saw the situation as having two influences. "The professional is more aware of subject matter, and depends less on lobbyists for information. But professionals probably stay in office longer and lobbyists get to know them better."

"Weighing the two influences, I think the professional would do a better job," he said.

The Public Speaks

Answers Civil Defense Critics; Asks One Channel

CEDAR FALLS — To the Editor: I would like to reply to the critics of the Civil Defense program in the state of Iowa and particularly those in Black Hawk County:

The Civil Defense System has several communication links with organizations in the state. These links are useless unless the system can obtain several well trained individuals to operate the radios. During the recent disaster at Charles City, there were only five persons to man eight radios and several telephones. The only adequate communications available were through the Citizen Band Radios.

Forgot System

During the disaster, most people forgot about the Civil Defense System and when reminded of it, the other organizations preferred to ignore them. It was not until Friday, after many organizations found they could not operate without prior planning or coordination, that they talked to Civil Defense.

The Red Cross declared in the Waterloo Sunday Courier (May 19, 1968) that they were the only official disaster agency. Black Hawk County Social Welfare declared in the Wa-

terloo Daily Courier (May 17, 1968) that aid to the stricken cities was being coordinated by them. Few organizations were willing to work with Civil Defense.

Told to Wait

The amateur radio operators called to Oelwein and Charles City only in response to personal requests while Civil Defense was told that they would have to wait six hours even when they had priority messages asking about needed blood and drugs.

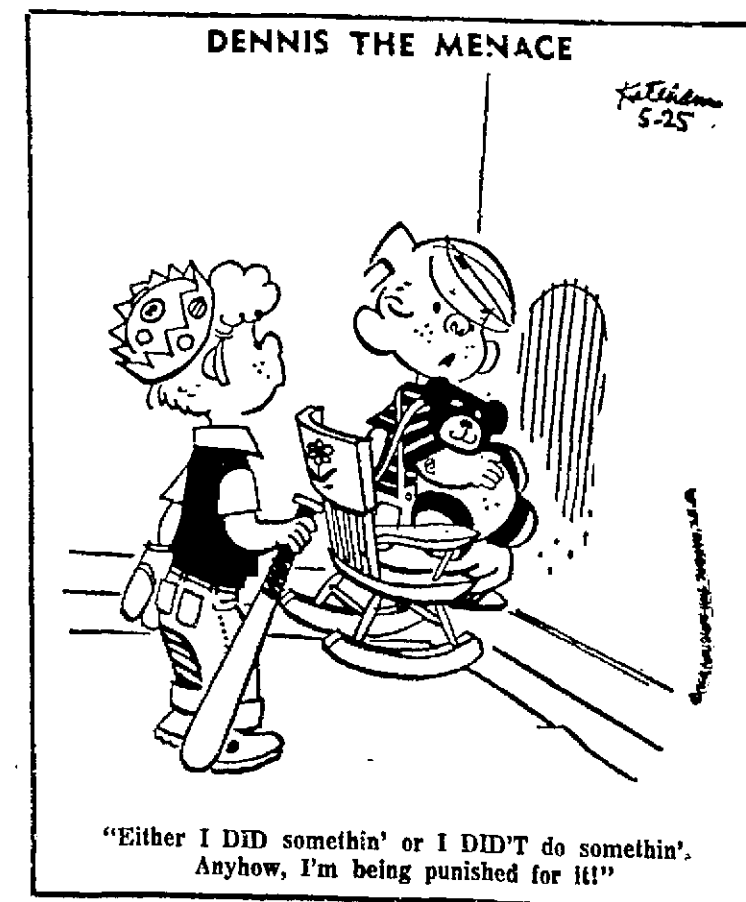
The Citizen Band Radios were invaluable, but they are allowed only limited power by the Federal Communications Commission so they don't have long range capabilities.

Channel Requests

What must be done in the future is to have the people of Iowa demand that Civil Defense, which has the planning and equipment, be the middle of an hourglass: all requests from a flooded or tornado devastated area should be channeled through Civil Defense. Civil Defense can then call the various organizations responsible for the actual delivery of disaster goods. From this there could be, through Civil Defense, an equal and or-

ganized distribution of disaster goods when and where they are needed.

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Waterloo Sunday Courier
EST. 1846
VOL. 102—No. 125
Cedar Falls: Bonner established 1854. Moved to Waterloo and name changed to Courier Dec. 25, 1888. Waterloo Reporter in 1914 and Waterloo Tribune in 1921 merged with Waterloo Courier. All rights to use of the name Courier, Reporter and Tribune retained by W. H. Hartman Company, publisher. Published daily except Saturday by the W. H. Hartman Co., Waterloo, Iowa 50604.
Courier Bldg., Corner Park Ave. and Commercial St.
Telephone Branch Exchange 224-2551
Basic subscription prices: By carrier per week 55c; by mail (Iowa) per year \$15.00; by mail (outside Iowa) per year \$25.00; special servicemen's rate (anywhere) per year \$15.00. No mail subscriptions accepted in Black Hawk County where carrier service is available.
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